

Human Writes

STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

Fall 2006

Volume I, Issue 4

Welcome

Welcome to the fourth edition of Human Writes, a quarterly newsletter from the State Human Rights Committee (SHRC). The purpose of this newsletter is to share ideas, problems, solutions and other items of mutual interest among the Local Human Rights Committees and the SHRC. Please submit your thoughts and ideas to:

DMHMRSAS
Office of Human Rights
P.O. Box 1797
Richmond, VA 23218
SHRC.newsletter@co.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov

LHRC SPEAK

Editor's Note: In the second issue of Human Writes, Ann Pascoe, Chair, Northern Virginia Regional LHRC, told us of the idea of getting the Chairpersons of all the LHRCs in NoVa together to share ideas and concerns. She promised to keep us posted and sure enough...

"So the idea of getting Chairs, Vice-Chairs and designated representatives from all eight LHRCs in Northern Virginia together was born. We were all set to meet and guess what happened? We met!! Not only did we meet, we have met twice, created a subcommittee to investigate recruitment as a region, agreed to continue to meet on a quarterly basis and decided on a name: the Northern Virginia Local Human Rights Coalition! It turns out, even though our respective LHRCs are very different in structure (most have a provider liaison while one does not have a liaison; one reviews over 178 behavior programs while others currently do not review any plans), method (some charge an affiliation fee while others do not charge dues), membership (some only have three members while another has 10 and affiliated providers (some only have one affiliate while another has as many as 28), we all have similar issues and problems! We now have a place to go to work collaboratively on these issues, to share ideas and have a collegial feeling to the volunteer work that we do! It is through the enthusiasm of the eight LHRC representatives that I believe that this coalition will flourish and become a successful model of cooperation among LHRCs and within a region. We will keep you updated on our efforts!"

-Ann Pascoe

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

In your Summer 2006 issue of the State Human Rights Committee Newsletter, there was a query concerning acronyms.

Many years ago, Concerned Citizens for Special People (CCSP), an advocacy and support group in the

Tidewater area, compiled such a list for the membership. Periodically, we enclose the list of acronyms in our quarterly newsletter or have copies available for those attending various meetings.

We'd be more than happy to have SHRC use this list or any portion of same if it would be helpful to 'deciphering those acronyms!'"

- Linda Ritter
CCSP Treasurer and LHRC Region V member

Editor's Note:

Thanks so much for sharing your list of acronyms with us, particularly because of its focus on MR and Developmental Disabilities. We will publish it in an upcoming Human Writes newsletter.

FYI SHRC/LHRC Seminar 2006

We are now looking to hold the seminar in the Fall of 2007 as it appears that the regulations will not be final until summer or early fall. As soon as we can more accurately predict the timeline for the regulations, we will set the date. Thank you for being patient!

Regulation Update

In accordance with Virginia Administrative Process Act, the State Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services Board (State Board) is requesting comments on the proposed revisions to the Rules and Regulations to Assure the Rights of Individuals Receiving Services from Providers of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse (human rights regulations). The proposed regulations are scheduled to be published in the Virginia Register of Regulations on September 18, 2006 and will also be available on the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services website at <http://www.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov> and the Virginia Regulatory Townhall at <http://www.townhall.state.va.us>. Your comments will be accepted through November 17, 2006. Comments on the proposed revisions to the regulations may be provided in writing to the Department's Office of Human Rights at the following addresses:

Mail:

Office of Human Rights
Bank Street
1797
Virginia 23218

1220
PO Box
Richmond,

Fax:

804-371-2308

Email:

cohrrreg@co.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov

The State Board will conduct public hearings on the proposed revisions to the regulations at the following locations:

October 11, 2006 from 4-6 pm
Valley Community Services Board

85 Sanger's Lane
Staunton, VA 24401

October 17, 2006 from 4-6 pm
Mt. Rogers Community Mental Health & Mental Retardation Services
770 West Ridge Road
Wytheville, VA 24382

October 19, 2006 from 4 to 6 pm
Southern Virginia Mental Health Institute
382 Taylor Dr.
Danville, VA 24541

October 23, 2006 from 7:00 to 9:00 pm
Stambaugh Building-7E and 7F
3033 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201

October 24, 2006 from 4 to 6 pm
Hospitality Center
Norfolk CSB
6401 Tidewater Dr.
Norfolk, VA 23509

November 8, 2006 from 4 to 6 pm
Henrico Area Mental Health and Retardation Services
Conference Room C
10299 Woodman Rd.
Gen Allen, VA 23060

November 9, 2006 from 6-8pm
Fairfax County Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035

Individuals providing comments on the regulations during a public hearing are encouraged to bring a written copy of their comments. Each speaker at a public hearing will be permitted 3 minutes for comment. Individuals requiring an interpreter or other type of accommodation should contact the State Board Office at 804-786-7945 no later than one week prior to the hearing.

- Margaret S. Walsh, Director
Office of Human Rights, DMHMRSAS

Hail & Farewell

The Office of Human Rights welcomes **Gianna Mitchell** as a new member of the Region V team. Gianna is providing advocacy services to Eastern State Hospital and providers in the Tidewater Region. We also welcome back our friend **Mary Towle**. Mary is working on the Region II team out of Northern Virginia Training Center. She is providing advocacy services to NVTC and Loudon County. We also said goodbye to **Tonya Cunningham** and **Andrea Coleman** this past month. Both ladies have moved on to new challenges and we wish them well.

The SHRC has a new member. **Christina Delzingaro** was appointed to serve a three year term ending June 30, 2009 by the State Board DMHMRSAS. For a number of years, Ms. Delzingaro served on the Western State Hospital LHRC as a consumer representative. Ms. Delzingaro's appointment will be an asset to the SHRC. She brings experience in the field of Mental Retardation and has a strong interest in promoting and protecting the rights of individuals served by the DMHMRSAS system. Her prior work experience includes Personnel and Quality Assurance Coordinator for the CSB in Lynchburg, Virginia. Most recently she was the Executive Director of the ARC of Piedmont in Charlottesville, Virginia. Help us welcome Christina to the committee.

-Mike Marsh, Chair SHRC

Meet The Advocate

*Each edition of Human Writes will profile one of the Advocates.
This edition introduces Reginald Daye, Regional Advocate of Region V.*

Greetings! I am Reginald Daye, Regional Advocate assigned to Region V. have worked as an advocate for the Department of Mental Health Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services (DMHMRSAS) for over twenty years. I started as a "Patient Advocate" at Eastern State Hospital (ESH) in 1986. At that time, there were over 900 patients at the facility. With only two advocates assigned to ESH, there were days that seemed as if all 900+ patients wanted to see the advocate. After two years, I became regional advocate assigned to provide advocacy services to the DMHMRSAS licensed community programs. This was a very exciting and challenging period of time for me. For the first time, the community programs were required to develop "human rights plans," which complied with the newly implemented community human rights regulations. Having worked both as a facility and community advocate has really helped increase my understanding of the differences and similarities in the level and type of services provided in both settings. This experience has enabled me to view issues from many perspectives and as a result, has made me a more effective advocate. I really enjoy this job and look forward to coming to work each day. When I arrive, there is always something new and challenging to address.

I am often asked what I believe is one of the most important rights of the individuals that we serve. I usually respond by saying that it is my belief that everyone has a right to actively participate in every aspect of their lives. This is especially true in the areas that impact on one's mental and physical well-being. This basic right will be in play each day for the individuals that we serve. I try to keep that in mind as I execute my duties.

I received my Masters degree in Health Services Administration from the New School University (formerly known as The New School for Social Research Graduate School of Management and Urban Professions) in New York. I earned a B.S. in Community Health Education from East Carolina University. Prior to moving to the Commonwealth of Virginia, I worked as Associate Director of the Quality Assurance Division at Bellevue Hospital Center. While working at Bellevue, I was responsible for providing administrative oversight to the offices of Risk Management, Utilization Review, Quality Assurance, Social Services, Patient Advocacy and Medical Records. I have also worked as Assistant Administrator at a nursing home and health related facility in NY. As you can see from my background, I have spent most of my educational and professional career in the health and human services delivery field.

I would now like to tell you about our region. Region V consists of Hampton Roads, Eastern Shore, Southampton County and the Middle Peninsula Northern Neck area. There are approximately 135 providers operating over 550 DMHMRSAS-licensed programs throughout this region.

This list of providers includes nine community services boards and two state operated facilities (ESH, Southeastern Virginia Training Center). Region V has 18 LHRCs with a membership capacity of 104. As you can see by the number of providers and programs they operate, the local human rights committee members are extremely busy. I would like to personally commend and thank both the present and past LHRC members for their dedication and commitment to the DMHMRSAS human rights system.

Obviously with the number of programs in this region, I have help in providing advocacy services. I would like to briefly introduce you to my staff:

Stewart Prost, Human Rights Advocate, has been with our office for eight years. Prior to joining our team, Stewart was employed as a Disability Rights Advocate for the Virginia Office of Protection & Advocacy. While living in Minnesota, he was employed by a nursing home as a Social Worker and as an Advocate with the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. He has a SS degree in Social Work from the University of Minnesota

Willie Barnes, Human Rights Advocate, has been with our office for two years. Prior to becoming an advocate, she worked as a Program Coordinator for the ARC of the Virginia Peninsula. She has also been employed as a Social Worker with Sentara Nursing Center and Tandem Nursing Rehabilitation Center. She has a SA degree in Social Work from Christopher Newport University.

Gianna Mitchell, Human Rights Advocate, has only been with us for a few weeks. Prior to joining our team, she was employed as a Social Worker with Lutheran Family Services of Virginia. She has also worked as a Recipient Rights Investigator with the Wayne County Mental Health Agency in Detroit, MI. Gianna has a SA in Sociology, MSA in Public Administration and is currently working on her Doctorate degree in Healthcare Administration.

Kathryn Ketch, Executive Secretary has been with our office for eleven years. Prior to joining our team, she was employed as an Office Services Specialist at Rappahannock Community College.

Meet the LHRC Honoree

*Each issue will introduce an outstanding LHRC member.
This issue spotlights Betty Velez. Your nominations are welcome.*

Betty Velez was born in Charlottesville, raised in Petersburg and moved to Richmond in 1993. She graduated from Richmond Professional Institute (now VCU) in 1966 with a degree in Sociology and Social Welfare, then spent the next 22 years as a Social Worker with the Southside Virginia Training Center (SVTC). Working primarily in the children's unit, she served mentally retarded clients, their families and their community representatives. Her first LHRC experience was with the Hiram Davis

Medical Center LHRC. After that, she went on to serve on four additional LHRCs - SVTC- LHRC, Petersburg Regional LHRC, Central State Hospital LHRC, and the Richmond Unified LHRC. In her role on the Medical Subcommittee on the SVTC-LHRC, she reviewed and critiqued therapeutic behavioral programs. Additionally, she has been involved in several in-service training programs and seminars over the years. "I enjoy the milieu and interaction with other members of the LHRC, as we strive to ensure the best life possible for the clients through the review of their rights, treatment and privileges," said Velez. Velez has found the difference between serving on a facility-based LHRC and a community-based LHRC to be very different and challenging. "Each LHRC has its individual characteristics and operates in a unique manner. I feel the membership of LHRCs needs more diversity in order to provide a greater range of ideas," she said. Velez is concerned about recruiting new LHRC members, and recognizes the need for many new members to keep pace with the many new programs and agencies being established in the community. Velez notes, "More effective methods and skills to educate the public as to who we are and what we do" will hopefully enhance recruitment efforts.